

REMARKS

By this Amendment, Claims 1, 4, 9, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23 and 24 have been amended, to place this application in immediate condition for allowance.

Examiner McDonald is respectfully thanked for her courtesy in granting a personal interview which was conducted in the office of her Supervisor, SPE Joseph Hail, with the SPE present, on March 4, 2009. During the course of the interview, the outstanding grounds of rejection in reliance upon the patents to Moss et al. and Suzuki et al. were discussed in detail. This Amendment is presented to address the Examiner's concerns regarding what she characterized as undue breadth of the claims as previously presented, and in an effort to place the claims in condition for allowance.

In the outstanding Office Action, all of the claims of record were finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,364,144 to Moss et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,953,784 to Suzuki et al. The ground of rejection is set forth on pages 2-3 of the Office Action, and the Examiner has extensively commented concerning Applicant's arguments on pages 3-5 of the Office Action. In light of the discussion at the interview of March 4, 2009, the claims have been amended in the following manner:

Independent Claims 1, 13 and 19 have been amended to specify that the cleaner body comprises "first and second sheets" partially connected together along "curved peripheries," that the fringe belt is "U-shaped," and that the fringe belt is fusion-bonded "solely" to the "first sheet" of the cleaner body with the fringes "terminating short" of the curved periphery of the first sheet.

Independent Claim 1 has been additionally amended to recite that the convex curvature of the fringe belt generally corresponds to the curved peripheries of the first and second sheets.

Independent Claims 1 and 13 have been amended to specify that the fiber bundle is bonded solely to the surface of the first sheet of the cleaner body, and independent Claim 19 has been amended to specify that the water absorbing sheet material is provided at the rear surface of the second sheet opposite to the front surface on the first sheet where the fringe belt is mounted on the cleaner body.

Based upon these amendments, it is respectfully submitted that the claims as now presented patentably distinguish from the combination of Moss et al. and Suzuki et al. Concerning Moss et al., the yarns 10, best seen in Figure 1 thereof, extend entirely around the periphery of the central sleeve portion 4. There is no teaching or suggestion to modify this structure to eliminate some of the yarns and replace them with the fiber bound body as recited in independent Claims 1 and 13. Moreover, each of the independent claims recites the cleaner body being made of two sheets and with the fringe belt solely mounted to a first of the sheets. In order for Moss et al. to be modified to meet this recitation, half the yarns 10 would have to be removed and the sheet 3 (Figure 2) out of which the sleeve 4 is fabricated would have to be made of two separate pieces attached together. There is no teaching or suggestion in the prior art to make these modifications to Moss et al. Moreover, the yarns 10 of Moss et al. are not disposed in a U-shaped configuration as now recited in these claims. For that teaching, the Examiner might be tempted to rely upon the teachings of Suzuki et al., particularly those shown in Figures 28a-d. Such a modification would not meet the terms of the claims since they all require the fringes to terminate short of the curved periphery of the first sheet. The Examiner might be tempted to rely upon Figures 31a, 31b and 31d for the teaching of the fringes terminating short of the curved periphery of the first sheet. However, the dusting portions 33' shown in those figures are not

disposed in a U-shaped configuration. It would be inappropriate under Patent Law to try to assemble together a fringe belt as recited by somehow combining the teachings of Figures 28a-d and Figures 31a-b and d of Suzuki et al. However, there is no teaching or suggestion outside Applicant's own disclosure to do so. Moreover, the embodiments of Suzuki et al. in Figures 28a-d do not teach or suggest a separate body on which a fringe element is fused. While the Examiner might argue that this is merely a process step in an apparatus claim, Applicant respectfully submits that the specific structure of Applicant's cleaner provides significant advantages over Moss et al. and Suzuki et al. Providing the cleaner body in two pieces partially fused together and then fusing the fringe element on one of them provides a simple assembly procedure as well as simple procedures for fabricating the individual components so interconnected.

Given the recitation in each claim at issue that the terminations of the fringes are short of the curved periphery of the first sheet, it is not seen how it is possible for either Moss et al. or Suzuki et al. to be a pertinent teaching against the patentability of these claims.

For these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that each of the independent claims at issue is now in condition for allowance.

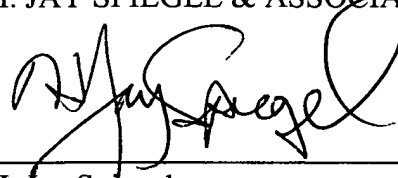
In order to ensure consistency, dependent Claims 4, 9, 16, 18 and 22-24 have been amended so that they properly correspond to the respective independent claims from which they depend so that all of the claims now presented are fully definite under the purview of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Although this Amendment is submitted after a Final Rejection, it is within the Examiner's discretion to enter it and allow the application. The prosecution of this application

has been lengthy and the Examiner has had every opportunity to conduct multiple searches of the prior art to uncover the most pertinent prior art based upon the disclosure as filed. It is certainly expected that the Examiner would update the prior search before taking any action on the application, but it is submitted that such an update would not be time consuming. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner use her discretion by entering this Amendment, updating the search, and mailing a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Jay Spiegel', is written over a horizontal line.

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